

# **All Hands HERALD**

October 2008

DEPARTMENT OF FIRE SERVICES • STOW, MASSACHUSETTS

***HAZMAT***

***CPSC RECALLS***

***PUBLIC EDUCATION***

***FIRE INVESTIGATION UNIT***

***CODE COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT***

***MASSACHUSETTS FIREFIGHTING ACADEMY***



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## About the *All Hands Herald*

**T**he *All Hands Herald* is published quarterly by the Department of Fire Services in January, April, July and October. The newsletter is meant to incorporate the traditional fire service meaning- all hands working to extinguish the fire. In the case of our newsletter, all hands includes the DFS staff providing each of you with information, training and assistance in dealing with the fire service issues which confront all levels of the fire service.

We hope that you enjoy our new look and feel and we encourage you to let us know how you like the *All Hands Herald* and what we can do to make it even more useful to you – our dedicated fire service members and customers. If you have suggestions, ideas, questions or want to make a contribution to the *All Hands Herald*, contact Jennifer Mieth 978-567-3381, [Jennifer.Mieth@state.ma.us](mailto:Jennifer.Mieth@state.ma.us) or Donna Nelson 978-567-3149 [Donna.Nelson@state.ma.us](mailto:Donna.Nelson@state.ma.us)

Cover photo was provided courtesy of the Acushnet Fire Department. Barry Hyvarinen is the talented contributing photographer; Judy O'Brien is the keen-eyed copy editor; and Jeff Harris is the graphic artist who pulls it all together. ♦

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# FROM THE FIRE MARSHAL



Photo by: Barry Hyvarinen

## All Hands HERALD

DEPARTMENT OF FIRE SERVICES • STOW, MASSACHUSETTS

**A**s we approach the 2008-2009 winter heating season, fire officials all over the northeast are extremely concerned about the potential for increases in heating fires and especially deaths and injuries.

We have seen over the past five years that one of every ten space heater fires results in a death. Generally we do not have many space heater fires, but those that do occur are often deadly. Fire officials fear that we will see a spike in the use of electric space heaters this year. Homeowners may be tempted to forego the annual service call as a way to save money, but a well running heating system will save money in efficiency and problems prevented.

First time owners of wood, coal or pellet stoves will need to be educated how to use them safely and how to properly dispose of ashes – an all too frequent cause of fires. People may be tempted to buy portable kerosene heaters in other states that are illegal for use in Massachusetts' homes because of the risk of fire and carbon monoxide poisoning. And worst of all, people without heat may be tempted to misuse their ovens for heat rather than seeking emergency shelter. That is dangerous as it also causes the risk of fires and carbon monoxide poisoning. The Governor has convened a task force of several state agencies to address a variety of concerns about the high cost of heating this winter. Under the umbrella of the Governor's initiative, the Department of Fire Services has partnered with industry, other

government agencies and non-profit groups to launch the *Keep Warm – Keep Safe* campaign to help educate our residents on heating safely this winter. I ask all members of the fire service to help educate people in their own community on how to *Keep Warm – Keep Safe*.

### **Joint Training**

As part of this initiative, the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Fire Services have conducted a series of joint trainings for fire and building officials on the laws, codes and regulations on heating equipment. It is important that fire and building officials be effective partners as the public explores ways to reduce heating costs.

### **Western MA DFS Facility**

Funding was included in the Governor's capital budget for the state to acquire the Springfield Fire Training facility as the western Massachusetts DFS facility. It will take some time for the acquisition and the rehabilitation of the property to be completed before it can truly be DFS-west, but this is an enormous step forward to improving the service to fire departments in the western part of the state. The lack of dormitory facilities in Stow, has meant very long commutes for firefighters coming to the main campus for training. A regional facility will improve access to training for all firefighters in the state as it will ease the pressure on the main academy campus and help reduce the waiting list for the recruit training program. The leadership and membership of the Western Massachusetts Fire Chiefs' Association were very instrumental in working with the Legislature to accomplish this initiative.

### **Mass. Fire Training Council**

Wakefield Fire Chief David Parr served as chairman of the Massachusetts Fire Training Council for many years before his retirement in the summer of 2008. The Massachusetts Fire Training Council is the sole certifying agency for certification of all levels of fire service personnel in the Commonwealth. The council has statutory authority to promulgate rules and regulations for the operation of the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy and has the authority to approve courses and curriculum taught by the academy. The Mass. Fire Training Council is a 13-member body appointed by the Governor. It has been a pleasure working with Chief Parr on so many different initiatives that impact firefighting training and firefighter safety. We wish him well in his new career and look forward to having an equally successful relationship with the new chairman, Randolph Fire Chief Charles Foley Jr.

### **Fire Equipment & S.A.F.E. Grants**

In October, fire departments will be busy completing their applications for Fiscal Year 2009 Fire Equipment and Student Awareness of Fire Education (S.A.F.E.) grants. These funds were re-authorized by this year's budget with the support of both the Legislature and the Administration. The goal for DFS is to get the money to communities as quickly as possible.

### **DFS Fall Conference**

I am looking forward to the DFS Fall Conference, *Meeting the Challenges of Tomorrow's Fire Service*. We hope this year's conference will be the start of an annual tradition. DFS staff

# FIRE INVESTIGATION UNIT

SPEEDY ARREST MADE IN

## Hingham Attempted Murder

**S**tate Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan, Hingham Fire Chief Mark J. Duff, and Hingham Police Chief Taylor Mills said Royce Cappolla was apprehended about a mile from 54 Roads Circle in Hingham and charged with arson and two counts of attempted murder.

Coan said, "Investigators believe that Mr. Cappolla set fire to his own home with his wife and child inside in the early morning hours of August 18, 2008. Fire is all too often the weapon of choice in domestic violence cases and has led to tragic consequences. Fortunately, no one was injured in this fire."

Fire Chief Duff said, "There were two separate fires set in two bedrooms on one side of the duplex. Investigators determined that both of the fires were intentionally-set."

Police Chief Mills said, "This was a case of good solid police work. Mr. Cappolla was quickly apprehended bringing quick resolution to the matter and peace of mind to the family."

The fire was jointly investigated by Hingham Fire and Police officials and State Police assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal. The case is being prosecuted by the Norfolk District Attorney's Office. ♦

SANDWICH LAW OFFICE

## Fire Sparked by Lightning

The most probable cause of the early morning fire on August 26, 2008 at 88 Route 6a in Sandwich was a lightning strike. Witnesses described a lightning strike in the area. The building housed three law offices including that of State Representative Cleon H. Turner who represents the First Barnstable district.

The fire was jointly investigated by members of the Sandwich Fire Department, the Sandwich Police Department and State Police assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal. Investigators spent hours conducting a forensic scene examination and interviews found the evidence was consistent with a lightning strike and no evidence was found to point to any other cause. ♦

## From the Fire Marshal

*Continued from Page 1*

has choreographed an assortment of topics from fire prevention to incident response, building construction to responder safety, and physical training to lessons learned. This three-day event will feature speakers from all over the United States, including veteran service members, public educators, authors, and investigators, combining hundreds of years of knowledge and experience. In addition to the tremendous program, the conference will provide an excellent environment for meeting peers, building relationships, and exchanging lessons learned.

## 19th Annual Firefighter of the Year Heroic Awards

Gov. Deval Patrick will present the 19th annual Firefighter of the Year Heroic Awards at a ceremony on December 3, 2008 at Faneuil Hall in Boston. I hope that as many members of the fire service as can will join us to honor our own for acts of courage and bravery. ♦

- Stephen D. Coan  
State Fire Marshal

BEVERLY FIRE CAUSED BY SPONTANEOUS

## Combustion of Refinishing Materials

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan and Beverly Fire Chief Richard F. Pierce said the investigation into the early morning August 22, 2008 fire at 890 Hale Street, Beverly has concluded the fire was due to the spontaneous combustion of painting solvents on rags. The historic home

was undergoing renovations at the time of the fire.

The fire was jointly investigated by the Beverly Fire Department, Beverly Police Department and State Police assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal. ♦

THREE TEENS INDICTED IN

## Suburban Fires

**WORCESTER** – Two Shrewsbury teenagers were indicted by a Worcester County Grand Jury on July 25, 2008 on a variety charges stemming from a fire that destroyed six businesses in the Northborough Shopping Center on March 25, 2008.

The two defendants were joined by a third Shrewsbury teenager in indictments alleging they firebombed a teacher's car in Shrewsbury on March 19, 2008.

The Grand Jury returned 14 indictments against Nicholas Couture, 18, of 33 Cross St., Shrewsbury: burning a building; malicious explosion; mali-

cious damage to a motor vehicle; breaking and entering in the nighttime with intent to commit a felony; injury to a depository; larceny in a building; larceny over \$250; three counts of larceny under \$250; two counts of intimidating a witness; attempted larceny; and willful throwing or placing of explosives.

The Grand Jury returned 11 indictments against Matthew Cramer, 18 of Gage Lane, Shrewsbury: willful throwing or placing of explosives; malicious damage to a motor vehicle; burning a building; breaking and entering in the nighttime with intent to commit a felony; injury to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



# Fireworks Being Manufactured in Plymouth Home - Repeatedly

In the July 2008 issue of the *All Hands Herald*, there was a story about a Plymouth man who was manufacturing fireworks in his home. Seized from the home of Robert Rinaldi at 215 Sandy Pond Road on April 7, 2008, were six improvised explosive devices, a box truck full of homemade fireworks, a quantity of black powder, chemicals and equipment used in the manufacture of fireworks. A criminal complaint was issued for six counts of possession of an infernal machine and one count of manufacture and storage of explosives without a license and he was arraigned on June 11 in Plymouth District Court.

Then again on July 23, 2008, State Police assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal executed a search warrant at 215 Sandy Beach Road in Plymouth. The search warrant revealed a significant quantity of materials used in the manufacture of pyrotechnics such as tubes, fuses, chemicals, powders and explosive materials. Also found were a number of devices in various stages of completion.

## Three Teens Indicted...

*Continued from Page 2*

a depository; larceny in a building; conspiracy; three counts of larceny under \$250; and malicious explosion.

The Grand Jury also indicted Evan Brown, 17, of 31 Ball St., Shrewsbury on charges of malicious damage to a motor vehicle; malicious explosion; and willful throwing or placing of explosives.

Couture and Brown are both being held without bail. Cramer will be summoned to court to face the charges. All three face arraignment in Worcester Superior Court. Brown, who was 16 and therefore a juvenile at time of his alleged participation in the crimes, was indicted under the Youth Offender statute and will be tried as an adult.

The Plymouth Fire Department, Plymouth Police Department, the state Department of Environmental Protection, the regional Hazardous Materials Response Team and the State Police Bomb Squad all assisted in the response to the home that lasted until early in the morning of July 24.

On July 26, 2008, Mr. Rinaldi was arrested and arraigned on July 28, 2008 on 23 counts of possession of an infernal machine and one count of manufacture and storage of fireworks as a result of a search warrant executed on July 23-24, 2008.

News reports reminded the public that Mr. Rinaldi had been seriously burned in a New Year's 1991 explosion at his Plymouth home caused by the illegal manufacture of fireworks. In that incident, the explosion shot him into the pond behind his home and burned him over 80% of his body, according to news reports. The Rinaldi home had been previously raided on July 6, 1990 and Rinaldi and his parents pled guilty to storing and selling fireworks. ♦

The three defendants are charged in the firebombing of a teacher's car in Shrewsbury in March. Less than a week later, Couture and Cramer allegedly broke into O'Brien's 5 and 10 Store in the Northborough Shopping Plaza, stole cash and a large quantity of Massachusetts Lottery tickets and then set the store on fire. The resulting five-alarm fire destroyed plaza and caused an estimated \$2 million in losses.

The investigation was jointly conducted by the Northborough Fire and Police Departments, the Shrewsbury Fire and Police Departments, the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and State Police fire investigators assigned to the Central Team in the Office of the State Fire Marshal. ♦

## INVESTIGATION UPDATE

# Dartmouth Code Enforcement

The Office of the State Fire Marshal has conducted a code enforcement investigation as a result of the June 4, 2008 fire at Wedgewood Commons in Dartmouth, which started when gasoline that was illegally stored in the apartment ignited.

The occupant of the fire building indicated that he had purchased the gasoline and dispensed it into illegal containers from a local gas station. Review of the videotapes did not provide any proof that gasoline was purchased and dispensed into unapproved containers. As a result of the inspection of the service station, several non-criminal citations were issued for other fire code violations.

The Mobil station on Faunce Corner Road in North Dartmouth received a non-criminal citation for: 1) failure to maintain the suppression system and 2) failure to comply with requirements for delivery and dispensing of gasoline. The suppression system must be inspected semi-annually and this one had not been inspected since August 2007. The specific failures to comply with dispensing requirements were the inability of the console operator to observe all fueling operations through the cameras and the intercom system between the pumps and the console operator was not working properly. There was a fine of \$100 for each citation.

In addition, an order of notice was issued to the gas station. They were ordered to allow fuel to be dispensed only into approved containers (even though there was no evidence they had not), to upgrade the camera system and to correct the diesel hose on pump #16 so that it does not extend beyond the positive limiting barrier. The code enforcement investigation is continuing.

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan said, "All of us have felt the pinch of skyrocketing gasoline prices but hoarding gasoline and storing it in the home is not an acceptable solution to high energy prices." ♦

## Conviction in Ashland Temple Fire

On Tuesday August 26, 2008, Cambridge juvenile court jury found two male juveniles guilty of possession of an explosive device and malicious damage to property. These charges stem from a Molotov cocktail incident that occurred at New England

Hindu Temple, 117 Waverly Street in Ashland that took place on July 23, 2007. The fire was investigated by the Ashland Fire and Police Departments and State Police fire investigators assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal's North Team. ♦

## Woman Arrested for Norfolk Fires

On June 11, 2008 an arson fire occurred at a one-family home on Meadowbrook Way in Norfolk. An attempted arson fire had occurred on the same street the previous week and a third arson had occurred on the same street some months prior. A woman led investigators to believe she had set fire to her own home and tried to light her neighbor's home the previous week. An arrest

warrant was sought to charge the woman with burning a dwelling and attempting to burn a dwelling and she has been indicted. There are no charges in the third fire. The fire was jointly investigated by the Norfolk Fire Department, Norfolk Police Department and several members of the South Team in the State Fire Marshal's Fire Investigation Unit. ♦

## Haverhill Arsonist Nabbed Quickly

On Monday July 21, 2008 there was a 2-alarm fire in a commercial barn at 480 Boxford Road, Haverhill. No injuries reported but the barn was destroyed. Investigators found multiple points of origin and an accelerant detection canine made several alerts. The fire was quickly determined to be arson. A 48-year old male suspect was quickly identified

and he made statements that led investigators to believe he set the fire. He was arrested and charged with burning a building. The fire was investigated by the Haverhill Fire Department, Haverhill Police Department and state police fire investigators assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal. ♦

JUVENILE GUILTY OF SETTING FIRE AT

## Holyoke Parson's Paper Mill

A significant fire occurred in Holyoke on June 10, 2008 when the closed Parson's Paper Mill at 84 Sargent Street went up in flames. A juvenile was found responsible for this fire and the court found him delinquent by reason of burning a building and breaking and entering in the night-

time on August 27, 2008. He will be in Department of Youth Services custody until he is 18 years old. The fire was jointly investigated by the Holyoke Fire Department, Holyoke Police Department and state police fire investigators assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal. ♦

## 5 Indicted for Hyannis Attempt to Murder

Previously reported in the *All Hands Herald*, five people were arrested for setting a fire on April 4, 2008 at 50 Hirimar Road in Hyannis by throwing a Molotov cocktail into a bedroom

where three children were sleeping. In August, indictments were handed down for Andrew Nickerson, Tiffany and Victor Mason, Jose Reyes and Joshua Debonis for burning of a

## CANDY-LIKE 'FRUIT BOMB' SENDS 3 Children to ER



*Excerpted From ConsumerReports.org July 28, 2008*

They are called "Fruit Bombs" and they come in a square foil pouch with cartoon characters

and pictures of bananas, oranges and other fruit on the front. Little dialogue clouds with the word "Poot!" decorate both the front and back of the shiny packages.

Sounds like the latest "gross out" candy that will soon be all the rage with the kiddie set, right? Well, not exactly. Fruit Bombs are in fact novelty air fresheners, although it is all but impossible to tell that from looking at the package.

Health officials in western New York are now warning parents and retailers about Fruit Bombs after a Buffalo-area convenience store put them out for sale on its candy aisle alongside the Starburst fruit chews and Snickers chocolate bars. Three young girls were rushed to the emergency room after eating some of the 30-cent Fruit Bombs they had purchased at the store.

Within 15 minutes of opening one of the pouches and sharing the liquid capsule and powder inside, one of the girls who had eaten the most, vomited and another complained her throat was burning. The third spit hers out because of the nasty taste, according to the Associated Press.

There is no manufacturer listed on the Fruit Bomb package or the store

CONTINUED ON **PAGE 5**



# FSC Cigarette Certification Program Update

Since the Commonwealth's "fire-safe cigarette" law took effect on January 1, 2008, progress has been made in the development and enforcement of the program. Six hundred ninety-eight (698) brand-styles from 19 manufacturers within 83 brands have been certified in the Commonwealth as Fire Standard Compliant (FSC). A brand is something like *Marlborough* or *Newport* and a brand-style is something like *Marlborough Lights hard pack* or *Newport 100s*. As of August 1, 2008, all six New England states have enacted laws pertaining to the FSC cigarette.

John Davies, the recently hired Cigarette Certification Compliance Officer, has begun spot-checking cigarette inventories at various warehouses throughout the state. Once a state contract for a laboratory facility is finalized, cigarette samples will be submitted and tested to ensure compliance with the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standard.

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan has asked the State Police commander of the Fire Investigation Unit and every fire chief to use a new cigarette fire checklist when investigating cigarette-caused fires.

This data will help determine if the new standard is effective, and is in addition to (*not* a replacement for) mandatory reporting of fires via the Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting system (MFIRS). For a copy of the checklist, visit the DFS website at [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs); click on *Quick Links* and *Fire Standard Compliant Cigarettes*.

For more information or to address questions or concerns, please contact a member of the FSC Program staff:

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## Hero to Zero

Pennsylvania has launched a new program *Hero to Zero Firefighter Arsonist Program* to train firefighters to spot arsonists within their ranks. There is nothing like a firefighter as firesetter to undermine the credibility of the entire fire department. The 3-hour program, developed by Trooper David Klitsch, a state fire investigator in the Office of the State Fire Marshal, explains the motives for firefighters who set fires and provides participants with tools for identifying firefighter arsonists among their ranks. The class outlines state arson laws, discusses the impact firefighter arson has on communities and offers a profile of a firefighter arsonist.

A 2003 Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) psychological profile said that firefighter arsonists tend to have dysfunctional families, lack interpersonal skills, are alcoholics, and suffer from depression or some form of borderline personality disorder. [Editors Note: Sounds just like every other juvenile firesetter who never received any appropriate intervention.]

Trooper Klitsch has found that there are several motives for firefighters who set fires, ranging from boredom, a desire for excitement especially where big fires are rare, or deep-seated psychological issues. Other experts believe that there is a strong

social motivation as the experience of firefighters working together to fight a fire is an opportunity for them to get together as a group.

Trooper Klitsch believes that it is the fires they set not a set personality type that might indicate a problem. A spike in nuisance fires, like trash can fires, or an increase in fire calls during a particular shift. The behavior starts small and tends to escalate.

The trooper also encourages fire chiefs to perform background checks on new recruits to prevent convicted arsonists from joining a fire department in the first place.

Dan Hebert of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) was quoted in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* as saying that "the best prevention is educating firefighters about the grave consequences of arson, because many firefighters 'don't see it as that big of a deal', especially when it comes to abandoned or unoccupied buildings. Education has proven to be remarkably effective. In South Carolina, the number of firefighters arrested for arson went from 47 in 1994 to three in 1996 after an education program was instituted in 1995. It's generally young men who if they could take back they would, but they never understood the consequences of their actions." ♦

## Fruit Bomb...

*Continued from Page 4*

display box, nor is there any listing of ingredients. The package does say "Made in Taiwan" and in very small letters on the back are the warnings "Eating Prohibited" and "Please Do Not Put in Mouth."

The mother of two of the girls who got sick told the AP that the packaging was to blame.

"It was located on a candy shelf. The owner of the store itself mistook it for candy," said Dee Hafi. "There is no way by looking at the package that you would know it's not candy."

Dr. Prashant Joshi, medical director of the Western New York Poison Center, told the AP that the pouches contain a capsule of citric acid that, when broken inside the pouch, mixes with baking soda, causing a chemical reaction that puffs up the bag until it bursts, releasing various odors.

Joshi said the local poison control center is trying to find the manufacturer and intends to alert the federal Consumer Product Safety Commission about the item. ♦

# Study on Fatal Fires from Smoking on Home Oxygen

The Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) in its August 8, 2008 edition, had an article on *Fatal Fires Associated with Smoking During Long-Term Oxygen Therapy – Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Oklahoma, 2000-2007*. The Fire Data Unit was happy to assist Andrew Pelletier of the Maine Department of Public Health in preparing this study by providing data about our experience here in Massachusetts with the persistent and difficult issue of smoking on home oxygen.

Some highlights of the study are:

- Approximately 1 million people in the U.S. receive long-term oxygen therapy (LTOT) annually through Medicare, most often for smoking-related lung disease;
- 38 cases were identified including 11 in MA;

- Nearly all were single fatalities that occurred in residences;
- 27% were in multi-family dwellings;
- Half started in the bedroom;
- Not all deaths were the smoker or the person on LTOT;
- Decedents ranged from 9-87 years old, with a median age of 67;
- Average fatality rate was 3.8 deaths per 10 million population per year;
- House fires occurred in 65% of incidents, the remaining fires were confined to the person or the person's immediate surroundings;
- Decedents survived an average of 15 days.

The study concluded that a multifaceted approach to the problem is warranted.

1. Health care providers should use evidence-based guidelines for

achieving smoking cessation. It has both immediate health and fire benefits.

2. The need for LTOT should be carefully assessed. In one recent study 40% of patients on LTOT did not meet the criteria for the therapy.
3. Strategies to prevent fire-related injuries should be emphasized. Patients and their household contacts should be thoroughly educated about the dangers of smoking in the presence of medical oxygen.
4. Multifamily dwellings such as apartment buildings and assisted living facilities should consider establishing nonsmoking policies for residents and staff. ♦

## NFPA ISSUES REPORT ON

## Smoking on Home O2

August 20, 2008 – In 2002-2005, oxygen administration equipment was involved in an estimated average of 209 home fires reported annually to fire departments, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) *report Fires and Burns Involving Home Medical Oxygen*. These fires caused an average of 46 civilian deaths and 62 civilian injuries per year. Smoking materials provided the heat of ignition in roughly six out of ten of these fires and fire injuries, and three in four of the deaths.

When more oxygen is in the air, things such as hair, plastic, skin oils,

clothing and furniture can catch fire at lower temperatures. Any fire that starts will burn hotter and faster.

According to the report, in 2003-2006, an estimated average of 1,190 people were treated annually in emergency rooms for thermal burns caused by ignitions associated with home medical oxygen; nearly 90 percent of the victims suffered facial burns. Smoking materials were reported to be the heat source in nearly three in four of these cases. Cooking and candles were the other common factors. ♦

### On August 18, 2002,

an 81-year old female died smoking while on oxygen therapy. The Boston Fire Department responded to a fire at a single-family residence in East Boston. The victim could not move around unassisted and was confined to her bed. The match she was using to light her cigarette caused her bedding and clothes to ignite. A neighbor and her grandson pulled her from the burning home, but not until after she had received life-threatening burns and suffered smoke inhalation. Fortunately the Boston firefighters were able to remove the six other oxygen tanks that were stored at the residence. The next day the victim succumbed to her injuries.



## Modular Home Construction Codes

By Acushnet Fire Chief  
Kevin A. Gallagher

### Polyurethane foam.

Those two words are enough to evoke very strong emotions within the fire service community. The tragedy of the Station Nightclub fire with 100 dead and over 200 injured within minutes of pyrotechnics igniting polyurethane foam insulation is still fresh in our minds. While manufacturers of foam found inside the nightclub seek to settle lawsuits, the fire service learns from the tragedy and collectively agrees; lessons learned, never again.

While our primary focus has been on polyurethane foam used for acoustic insulation in places of assembly, a much more common use has been discovered in single-family homes across the Commonwealth.

In January of this year, the Acushnet Fire & Rescue Department responded to a structure fire in a two-story, single-family modular constructed home. The occupants were alerted to the fire not by smoke alarms but by an increased sensation of the house getting warm. Four minutes after the receipt of the first 9-1-1 call, the first on scene police officer announced the structure was 75% involved. The house was destroyed in a matter of minutes.

The fire investigation, led by state police in the Office of the State Fire Marshal, would reveal that discarded smoking material placed in a flower pot on the farmer's porch smoldered for several hours before finally igniting the vinyl siding. The fire consumed the farmer's porch then raced up the building, through the open soffit and into the lightweight truss laden attic.

The origin and cause did not answer the most disturbing question; why did this five-year old colonial burn so quickly? Arriving personnel commented on flames being visible above the tree line from a half mile away. A column of thick black smoke

– reminiscent of tire dump fires of the past – was seen from miles away. To answer these questions we solicited the assistance of the local building inspector, the Department of Fire Services (DFS) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The answers we are finding tell us that our understanding of this particular type of construction that is gaining in popularity across the Commonwealth, is exceptionally limited.

Modular homes are built in factories and are shipped over-road in sections to the house lot. The modular "boxes" are then lifted off the flatbed truck and positioned in place. The structure that burned in our commu-

that dimension – 20 to 22 inches in height – exists in the front and rear sections (joined at a marriage wall) of two story modular homes.

What is of equal concern is the presence of polyurethane foam structural adhesive used to affix the sheetrock to the structural members. Industry insiders tell us that the use of glue is widespread in the industry and allowable by code. What we discovered, after sending samples of the glue from a newly constructed modular to Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), is that the glue is highly flammable. Samples subjected to a calorimeter test indicate that it ignites fast, burns readily, loses its consistency and produces hazardous

levels of heat as well as thick, black smoke. While additional testing may be required, the WPI test results have had a powerful impact.

With the assistance of



Photo by: Acushnet Fire Dept.

nity consisted of four boxes, two on each level, joined at a marriage wall. When these boxes leave the factory they arrive on site basically complete with floor and wall assemblies, cabinets, bathrooms, rugs, etc. When placed on top of each other a void space is created between the sheetrock ceiling of the first level and the plywood decking of the second level floor. In some cases, we have seen voids of 20 – 22 inches in height that run the length and width of the structure up to the marriage wall. We are finding the typical dimensions of modular boxes in our community to be 48' x 14', therefore a void of

State Fire Marshal Stephen Coan, we presented all of our findings to Department of Public Safety and Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS) officials at the end of May of this year. The BBRS in turn transmitted a survey to the inspection agencies that have clients that ship modular structures to Massachusetts asking them to comment on their use of polyurethane foam adhesives, inform them of adhesive substitutes as well as comment on the large, open void created in multi-level structures. The BBRS is poised to take action on these important

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



## Modular Homes Construction Codes

Continued from Page 7

issues. (to view the report and supporting documentation, visit [www.mass.gov/dps](http://www.mass.gov/dps) -- under the Publications banner; Report on Acushnet

modular construction in Hanson, Massachusetts this past July. Videos of that fire have been posted on YouTube™ (search: Hanson MA

safety of our firefighters is alarming. A room and contents fire has the very real possibility of burning overhead a significant distance from the location of the fire due to the large void space. As the fire in our community demonstrated, fire can attack the glue from the unprotected side resulting in ceiling collapse. All of the eighteen modular homes in our community are vinyl sided, most with open soffits and truss roofs. With lessons learned from the Hanson fire, we must now question the possibility of heat transfer through the sheetrock resulting in a deterioration of the adhesiveness of the glue which could also result in collapse. Can an arcing wire in a wall generate enough heat to ignite the glue that holds the protective sheetrock to the wall joists? Of greatest concern is the inability to quickly distinguish a residence of modular construction from that of traditional stick built construction when arriving on scene of an incident.



Photo by: Acushnet Fire Dept.

Modular Structure Fire 13 January 08).

Is our experience in Acushnet the result of a perfect storm or is it part of a national trend? Our attempt to answer this question is stymied by the lack of reliable data. Neither the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) nor its state counterpart, the Mass. Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS), require information on the type of construction used in the structures that we report have burned. With no centralized database we have no way of connecting the dots. Since looking into this issue we have heard about recent fires in modular structures across the country. We were stunned to learn that a fire destroyed a two-story colonial of

house fire). These images are frighteningly familiar to what our Acushnet firefighters witnessed in January. Fortunately, no civilians or firefighters were injured in these fires.

The impact on these findings to the

West Warwick taught us that polyurethane foam can be used in an inappropriate way resulting in tragedy. Acushnet taught us that the same potential dangers lurk in every community. ♦



Photo by: Acushnet Fire Dept.



# PUBLIC EDUCATION

## Fire Prevention Week

*Prevent Home Fires* is the theme of this year's National Fire Prevention Week celebrated October 5-11, 2008. Home is where most people feel safest, yet homes are where 75% of the building fires and two-thirds of the fire deaths take place in Massachusetts. ♦



## Thank You to Papa Gino's



It was with great sadness that the folks at Papa Gino's told State Fire Marshal Coan that after 14 years of a successful partnership with the fire service they would not be able to sponsor open houses at local fire houses this year. We thank them for their community service and hope they will be able to renew the partnership in the future. ♦

## Keep Warm, Keep Safe

The State Fire Marshal and the Massachusetts fire service are extremely concerned that the high cost of energy will lead to an increase in heating-related fires and fire deaths. Fire educators are encouraged to emphasize heating safety this fire prevention month, which fits nicely in the overall theme of *Prevent Home Fires*. Materials from the Keep Warm, Keep Safe campaign are available on the DFS website and from the Public Education Unit.

### Resources

**Department of Fire Services:** statistics and safety tips and easy-to-use and reproduce one-page edu-

cational *Fire Factors*. Call the Public Education Unit at 978 567 3381 or go to [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov) then click on *Quick Links* then *Fire Safety Topics*.

**NFPA:** *Fire Prevention Week, Keeping Your Community Safe and Warm, Keeping Your Community Safe and Energized*. These community education kits are available online at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) and have many resources for firefighters and classroom teachers.

**Department of Public Health:** great easy-to-read factsheets on fire safety topics available on line at [www.mass.gov/dph](http://www.mass.gov/dph) click on *Injury Prevention* and *Educational Materials*. ♦



Broadcast Yourself™

## YouTube Video Contest

The *Massachusetts Association of Fire Educators* and the state *Department of Fire Services* in conjunction with the *MA Property Insurance Underwriting Association* are sponsoring a contest for Massachusetts' high school students. Oftentimes, videos on the popular Internet video website, YouTube, display the dangerous and inappropriate uses of fire. For this contest, students are asked to develop a research-based video that explains the dangers of fire and ways in which individuals can prevent burn injuries. The contest is aimed at educating students on fire safety and burn prevention through their own individual group research and faculty supervised video production.

The Department of Fire Services asks fire educators to actively promote the contest with colleagues at the local high school. Ask the school about who teaches communication or media production. Mention the fact that this contest addresses learning standard components 27.6(Gr. 9-10) and 27.8(Gr. 11-12) of the *Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework* (June 2001), Media Strand-General Standard 27: Media Production. School districts offering communications classes, which include the design and creation of the media productions, are encouraged to promote this contest through an independent or group assignment as part of its curriculum.

More information about the contest is posted on the DFS website and from the Public Education Unit. ♦

## Ban Novelty Lighter

*From the Congressional  
Fire Services Institute (CFSI)*

On July 31, Senators Ron Wyden (OR) introduced S. 3375, the Protect Children from Dangerous Lighters Act. The legislation bans cigarette lighters constructed to look like toys or regular household items. Commonly referred to as “novelty lighters,” the lighters pose a serious threat to the safety of children. Senator Susan Collins (ME) and Senator Christopher Dodd (CT), both co-chairs of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, joined Senator Wyden as original co-sponsors of the bill.

The ban would require the Consumer Product Safety Commission

(CPSC) to treat novelty lighters as a banned hazardous substance, prohibiting the manufacture, importation, or sale of the lighters anywhere in the country. Both Maine and Tennessee have recently passed novelty lighter ban legislation and similar bans are being introduced in other states.

In October of 2007, the National Association of State Fire Marshals introduced a resolution before CFSI’s National Advisory Committee (NAC) calling for a ban on novelty lighters. The resolution was unanimously approved. ♦



*Annual Hyannis Fire and Police Kids' Day  
On July 26, 2008, over 1,000 children attended  
this free event.*

WIN A GRANT FOR YOUR FIRE DEPARTMENT!

## MA-RI FAIR Plan 2009 Poster Contest

Each year, on behalf of all property and casualty insurance companies of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Property Insurance Underwriting Association (MPIUA), also known as the MA-RI FAIR Plan, sponsors a Fire Prevention Poster Contest for all students in grades 6-8.

In appreciation for firefighter-educators' help in promoting and conducting the contest, we have added a benefit to assist local fire departments in fire safety and education. *The towns who have the first, second and third place winning posters in the statewide contest will each be granted a check in the amount of \$2,500, \$1,500 and \$1,000, respectively, to be used for any equipment, materials, outreach, education, research and prevention efforts relative to the fire prevention/education initiative.*

To help complement local fire prevention programs, beginning this

year the annual theme of the contest will be Fire Prevention Everyone/Everyday. The county contest will begin October 1, 2008. The county coordinators must receive all entries by January 30, 2009.

All first place county posters must be received by MPIUA no later than Wednesday, April 1, 2009 in order to be entered into the statewide competition. First, second and third place statewide winners will be announced at an award luncheon on Thursday, May 28, 2009 at the Sheraton Framingham Hotel. Parents, teachers, principals, fire officials and county coordinators will be invited to attend this luncheon.

Our goal is to have every county in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts participate in this contest. And remember, if your town places first, second or third in the statewide contest, you can win a grant for your fire department!!

Feel free to enlist any members of the community who may be interested in giving you some help.

If you need our assistance, copies of the rules or have any questions, please contact one of the following individuals:

Nancy Rodes – 617-557-5535  
– [postercontest@mpiua.com](mailto:postercontest@mpiua.com)

Ronald Meehan – 508-326-2047  
– [rmobca@verizon.net](mailto:rmobca@verizon.net)

Eileen Driscoll – 617-557-5553  
– [eadriscoll@mpiua.com](mailto:eadriscoll@mpiua.com)

Jennifer Mieth – 978-567-3381  
– [Jennifer.Mieth@state.ma.us](mailto:Jennifer.Mieth@state.ma.us)

Information will also be posted on the DFS website at [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov) go to **Quick Links** and click on **Poster Contest**. ♦



## GOVERNOR PATRICK SIGNS Booster Seat Law

**G**overnor Deval Patrick signed the booster bill into law on April 11, requiring children to ride in booster seats until they are eight years old or reach 4 feet 9 inches in height. The law took effect on July 10, 2008.

"This new law sends parents and caregivers an important message that seat belts are not designed for children, but booster seats are," said DPH Commissioner John Auerbach. "Most injuries can be prevented by using booster seats properly."

Motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of children between the ages of four and eight. Booster seats can reduce those injury rates by 58 percent compared to seat belt use for the same age group.

The purpose of the booster seat, which is used when children reach the weight limit of their forward facing car seat, is to position the safety belt across the stronger parts of a child's body – the hip and shoulder rather than the stomach and neck. The safest place for children to ride is in the back seat.

The new law still requires children ages 8-12 years old to wear a safety belt when traveling in an automobile. The previous law only required children younger than five years old and weighing less than 40 pounds to ride in a child safety seat.

Booster seats can be purchased for between \$15 to \$150 and must be used with a vehicle lap/shoulder belt. The two most widely used types of booster seats are the "high back" or a "backless" booster seat. Both must be used with a vehicle's lap/shoulder belt for proper positioning.

Consumers with questions about the booster seat law may contact the DPH safety information line at 1-800-227-7233 (1-800-CAR-SAFE). ♦

## Halloween Fire Safety Tips



Halloween is a holiday that is associated with the use of fire. There is a lot of candle

use in combination with combustible harvest materials, clothing and costumes. Since it is a special holiday for children, and it is important that we help families celebrate it as safely as possible. The Depart-

ment of Fire Services has an educational pamphlet on *Halloween Fire Safety* that can be downloaded off the website at [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs) click on *Fire Safety Topics* and then *Halloween Safety*. It was distributed in the monthly mailing to all fire departments and through the Department of Public Health to a number of injury prevention professionals. It covers fire safety, poison prevention and pedestrian safety issues. ♦

## PRESIDENT SIGNS PROVISIONS OF THE Campus Fire Safety- Right-to-Know into Law

*Will mandate schools report fire safety information each year to the Secretary of Education and will be instrumental in raising the level of fire safety on campuses across the nation*

*By Ed Comeau, Campus FireWatch*

BELCHERTOWN, Mass., August 17, 2008 — On Thursday, August 14, President Bush signed the Higher Education Act into law. This bill contained provisions from the Campus Fire Safety Right-to-Know Act introduced by Congressman Bill Pascrell (NJ-8) and Senator Frank Lautenberg (NJ) which will require schools across the nation to report fire safety information to the U.S. Department of Education, including:

- The number of residence hall beds protected by automatic fire sprinkler systems and fire alarm systems

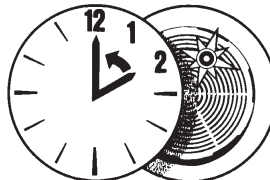
- The number and severity of fires each year
- The number of students injured or killed by fires
- The amount of fire prevention training provided to students
- Policies relating to fire safety

This legislation was first introduced in 2001 following the tragic fire at Seton Hall University that claimed the lives of three freshmen and has been debated in every session of Congress since that time. A coalition of 13 other national fire safety organizations joined with *Campus Firewatch* in working with Congress to pass this ground-breaking legislation.

More information can be found at [www.CampusFireSafetyMonth.org](http://www.CampusFireSafetyMonth.org) or [www.campus-firewatch.com](http://www.campus-firewatch.com). ♦

## Change Your Clock, Change Your Battery

### CHANGE YOUR CLOCK



### CHANGE YOUR BATTERY

On Sunday, November 2, 2008 we will change our clocks back to Eastern Standard Time. This is an excellent opportunity to remind the residents of your community when they change their clocks to also change

the batteries in both their smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

The national campaign is sponsored by Energizer Battery Co. and the International Association of Fire Chiefs. 2008 campaign kits, information and applications for battery donations will be posted online at the end of September at [www.energizer.com/keepsfekeepgoing](http://www.energizer.com/keepsfekeepgoing). ♦

# New DFS Warehouse Nears Completion



directly above the new septic system that went on-line at the end of August. The old septic field was decommissioned at that time and construction of the new administration and link buildings is now proceeding in that area.

In addition, part of the

parking area along State Road and in front of the warehouse and the new administration building (under construction) has been paved, and is available for staff and visitor parking.

Construction continues moving forward, slightly ahead of schedule, on the new administration building, the firehouse and the link building, which will include the new “crib” room and cafeteria. The foundation

The finishing touches on the new Department of Fire Services (DFS) warehouse are being completed as this **All Hands Herald** goes to press. DFS is planning to move the print shop, mailroom, engineering, and other staff into the new facility by the end of October. It is also anticipated that DFS will start to move its inventory, currently stored in several on-site locations, into the warehouse by the beginning of November.

The new remote parking lot, which was paved the second week in September, is now open and available for recruit, staff and visitor parking. This new parking area is located



## SAUGUS FIRE CHIEF

### Pushes for Sprinklers

Saugus Fire Chief James Blanchard has used the recent Peabody apartment building fires to persuade the Saugus Housing Authority to sprinkler the attic in a new project it is building in partnership with the Greater Lynn Senior Services. While the building code does not presently require sprinklers in the attics of these buildings (where other provisions of the building code are in place to help prevent the spread of fire), the recent horrific examples indicate that putting sprinklers in the attic might be a wise move. Chief Blanchard pointed out that the new project would house older adults who might be slower moving and with slower response times than on average and could use the increased time to escape that a more robust sprinkler system can afford. He also

addressed many of the myths and misconceptions that people have about sprinklers, which are frequently perpetuated by the media and mass culture. For example, people often don't realize that not all the sprinkler heads are likely to go off at once, but rather often only one sprinkler head is needed to control the fire until firefighters arrive. Others wrongly think that sprinklers can be set off easily or accidentally, which is highly improbable. Chief Blanchard sets a marvelous example of using the expertise of the fire department to educate the public about fire safety options to deploy the power of persuasion. ♦

of the administration and part of the link building was completed this summer. The installation of the steel frames for both buildings began the first week in September. It is anticipated that the steel frames will be enclosed before winter weather sets in, allowing for numerous contractors to complete interior work throughout the winter and spring months.

These new structures are scheduled to be ready for occupancy by July 2009. Once this second phase of the construction project is completed, then work will begin on the third phase - retrofitting the current DFS main building. This work, and the completion of the cafeteria and seminar area in the link building, is scheduled for completion by the fall of 2010. ♦



# E-911 Legislation Passed This Summer

**N**ewly enacted E-911 legislation (H5044) will increase safety and update telephone access for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, disabled, and elderly. The bill establishes a 911 department within the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS). It includes action to improve E-911 accessibility, and allows the MA Telephone Relay Service to add captioned telephone service. Action will be taken to make E911 service compatible with wireless devices including the text pagers and Internet based relay services widely used by people who are deaf and hard of hearing. Captioned telephone provides an advanced form of technology with which hard of hearing, late-deafened and deaf individuals who use their voices will speak into a phone and converse with simultaneous captioning. The E-911 and Massachusetts relay services will include specific involvement from the Mass. Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH), Mass. Office on Disability (MOD), Mass. Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), and the Mass. Commission for the Blind (MCB) to ensure further access.

Excerpts related to Deaf and Hard of Hearing constituents are as follows.

- The state 911 department replaces Statewide Emergency Telecommunications Board within the EOPSS. There will be a state 911 Commission to provide strategic oversight and guidance related to enhanced 911 service within the Commonwealth. The 911 Commission will be chaired by the secretary of public safety and will include fire and police representatives as well as the director of the MA Office on Disability, and the commissioner of MCDHH.
- The department will review and assess technological and operational capability and financial feasibility of handling wireless calls. If such capability exists, the department, with the commission's approval, will establish standards for wireless access, and will assess new communications technologies with which people can connect with 911 services, including but not limited to wireless, video, broadband, and IP-based systems.
- The department will work with the MA Office on Disability (MOD) and the MA Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH), the disability community, and with towns and cities to ensure that 911 services are accessible to people with disabilities.
- Funding for E-911, the MA Relay Service, and equipment distribution programs will be provided by a single monthly surcharge on all wired and wireless services, which are capable of directly accessing and utilizing an enhanced 911 system. The initial surcharge is set by the Legislature, adjustments by the Department of Telecommunications and Cable (DTC).
- The department will provide and maintain a Specialized Customer Premises Equipment (SCPE) distribution service, and make these services available to any residential subscriber who is certified by MCDHH as being deaf or hard of hearing and in need of SCPE equipment, certified by the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) as having a sufficient visual disability, and by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) as having a sufficient other disability. Definition of SCPE includes captioned telephone equipment.
- Telecommunications relay service providers will be encouraged (but not required) to provide services from a center located within the Commonwealth using residents of the Commonwealth as employees of the center. Preference in employment at the center will be given to people with disabilities as defined within this legislation. Specialty types of relay service (i.e., captioned telephone) will not be required to be provided from a telecommunications center located within the Commonwealth.
- The new department and the MCDHH will review and make recommendations to DTC regarding SCPE, and will issue a request for proposals for SCPE services, subject the DTC review and approval. The department and MCDHH will review and make recommendations to DTC regarding telecommunications relay services (TRS).
- There will be an advisory committee on accessibility of communication services for disabled persons. This committee will include the secretary of health and human services or her designee, the commissioner of MCDHH or designee, commissioner of MRC or designee, commissioner of MCB or designee, director of MOD or designee, 12 people appointed by the governor: two who are deaf, two who are hard of hearing, two who are blind, two with significant other visual disabilities, two with speech disabilities, and two with mobility or motor disabilities. This council will make recommendations to the department and to DTC on all matters of policy related to communication services and equipment for people with disabilities. ♦

DECEMBER 3, 2008 – 19<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

## Firefighter of the Year Awards Ceremony

Gov. Deval Patrick will present the 19th annual Firefighter of the Year Heroic Awards at a ceremony on December 3, 2008 at Faneuil Hall in Boston. ♦

# CODE COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT

The following advisories were recently sent to local fire departments from the Office of the State Fire Marshal. The full text of the advisories may be found online at [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs) then in the right hand column click on OSFM Advisories. If you have any questions, please contact the Code Compliance & Enforcement Unit at (978) 567-3375 or in western Massachusetts at (413) 587-3181. Building officials can contact the Department of Public Safety at 617-727-3200.

## Gas Station TV®

September 5, 2008

A new product has begun to appear in some self-service fueling facilities. The product consists of a satellite TV mounted on the top of the fuel dispenser. The TV receives a variety of programming including news, weather, and sports, as well as ads for goods sold in the adjacent convenience store.

This office has reviewed documentation from the dispenser manufacturers, and fire suppression system companies. As a result of that review, we have determined that the installation and use of these devices will not require resubmittal to this office for self-service review and approval.

Gas Station TV® has been advised that they are responsible for obtaining all required local approvals and permits. ♦



## Unattended Self-Service Motor Fuel Stations

September 1, 2008

It has been brought to our attention that some major suppliers are encouraging retailers to allow for unattended self-serve motor fuel stations along major routes. Therefore, I wanted to remind everyone that unattended self-service motor fuel stations in Massachusetts are prohibited. In accordance with 527 CMR 5.08: (5), self-service motor fuel stations (gasoline or diesel) must be under the control of the owner, operator, or duly authorized employee at all times while motor fuel is being sold or dispensed. In addition, the controlling console providing power to the pump must be in constant attendance by the owner, operator or employee at all times while motor fuel is being dispensed.

The use of credit card reading devices/cash acceptors on self-ser-

vice dispensers does not relieve the requirements for an attendant. The credit card readers/cash acceptors are only to be used as a means of payment at the pump. The credit card/cash acceptors must not be used as physical authorization for the dispensing of motor fuel. "Each sale shall be individually authorized by the self-serve attendant" (527 CMR 5.08(L)(1)).

An attendant is not required at establishments that fuel their own vehicles and are not open to the public. However, that same business may not sell fuel to others (by contract or otherwise) without complying with the requirements of 527 CMR 5.08. Such a facility would be considered self-service. ♦

## Updates to 527 CMR

August 6, 2008

There have been several recent updates to the State Fire Code, 527 CMR and copies were sent to local fire departments.

1. An amendment to 527 CMR 4.00, relative to storage tanks standards and includes the adoption of a new standard, UL 2258 which now allows the use of a UL listed nonmetallic tank.
2. An amendment to 527 CMR 10.13 extends the effective date (from 7-1-08 to 7-1-09) of enhanced regulations relative to crowd managers and safety checklists for certain assembly occupancies.
3. 527CMR 8.00, relating to the transportation of flammable and combustible liquids, has been amended by changing the quantities and limits of "unattended" storage of such liquids without a permit, registration or license (c.148, s.13), as the case may be.
4. Amendments have also been made to 527 CMR 14.00, which grants to the head of the fire department the enhanced ability to inspect certain storage facilities and also to confirm compliance with certain OSHA requirements. ♦



## Halloween and Other Special Events



September 1, 2008

**T**he Office of the State Fire Marshal and the Dept. of Public Safety reissued a memo as a reminder that Massachusetts has moved into the "Halloween season". It was originally a communication that was sent to all the fire officials

and building inspectors in the Commonwealth. The Halloween season is a fun time of the year to be enjoyed, but as fire officials the Halloween season generates common Life-Safety issues, particularly where "haunted houses" and/or "fun houses" are operated and open to the public as ASSEMBLY USE buildings or portions thereof. This memorandum contains information from that original memo referencing relevant sections of both the fire and building codes. We strongly recommend that both local fire and building officials work together when addressing these life-safety issues. It can be found on the DFS website at [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs), click on OSFM Advisories. The Department of Public Safety will be providing additional information on their website, as well, regarding this subject ([www.mass.gov/dps](http://www.mass.gov/dps)). ♦

## Counterfeit Globe Sprinkler Heads

August 1, 2008

The Office of the State Fire Marshal recently sent to local fire departments information from Underwriter's Laboratories warning of counterfeit automatic sprinkler heads and how to identify them. If these are encountered during an inspection, an order shall be provided to the appropriate party. The order shall be to direct the owner to remove and replace these devices pursuant to your authority under 527 CMR 1.06(1)(b).

It is important that the public trust in fire sprinklers be maintained. Sprinklers have a 100+ year record of reliability and effectiveness. Aside from firefighting and explosion fatalities, the National Fire Protection Association has no record of a fire killing more than two people in a completely sprinklered building where the system was properly operating. Our collective efforts are directed towards maintaining the public's ability to have complete confidence in sprinklers. ♦

## Heating Appliances

October 1, 2008

With the heating season fast approaching, the Office of the State Fire Marshal would like to highlight several applicable provisions of the state statutes and codes related to heating appliances.

Solid-fueled appliances such as stoves and furnaces, which burn fuels such as wood, pellets, corn or biofuel, must meet the requirements of the State Building Code (780 CMR) and their installation requires a building permit.

Appliances fueled by natural gas or propane must meet the requirements of the State Plumbing & Fuel Gas Code (248 CMR). A permit is required from the local plumbing inspector for their installation or

modification, and a licensed plumber or gasfitter must do the installation.

Appliances, which are fueled by kerosene or fuel oil, must meet the requirements of the State Fire Code (527 CMR 4). A permit from the fire department is required for their installation or modification, and person holding an oil burner certificate of competency must do the work.

Installed electric heaters and heating systems must meet the requirements of the State Electrical Code (527 CMR 12). A permit from the electrical inspector is required for their installation or modification, and the installation must be done by a licensed electrician.

The only unvented fuel fired heaters permitted in Massachusetts are those meeting the requirements of the State Fire Code (527 CMR 31) and the State Plumbing & Fuel Gas Code (248 CMR). Their installation requires a permit from the local fire department and the local gas inspector. A licensed plumber or gasfitter must do the work.

Portable LP-gas, and liquid fueled heaters are prohibited under the provisions of Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 148. Certain construction heaters are exempted from this prohibition. Construction heaters must meet the requirements of the State Fire Code (527 CMR 20). ♦

## Alteration, Addition & Change of Use for Existing Buildings

**A**ny time an existing building larger than 35,000 cubic feet in volume is repaired, altered, added onto, or undergoes a change in use, the building official must forward the fire department for their review and approval a set of plans and written building code analysis of the effects of the change. The requirement for the written report is found in Chapter 34 of the *Massachusetts State Building Code* (780 CMR), Section 3402, and as such, is often referred to as the 'Chapter 34 Report'. As it seems with all regulations, there are certain buildings exempt from the Construction Control and Chapter 34 Report requirements – such as single-family homes, two-family homes, and buildings used for agricultural purposes. Note that the 35,000 cubic feet cut-off is specified as a volume (cubic feet) and not an area (square feet).

The purpose for the analysis in the report, which must be prepared and submitted by a Massachusetts registered architect or professional engineer, is to identify the necessary building code requirements related to fire protection, egress, structural, lighting, ventilation systems, and energy conservation systems, that result from the proposed changes and additions. The report should also identify if there are any alternatives proposed when the prescriptive requirements of the code will not be met ('Compliance Alternative'). The requirement for the transmittal of the report and plans to the fire department is found in Section 110.8 of 780 CMR.

Based on the proposed work, the Chapter 34 Report should answer questions such as:

- Are fire sprinkler systems required?
- Are manual fire alarm pull stations required?
- Is a smoke detection system required?

The answer to these questions will typically depend on the original and final use group classifications and the extent of work proposed. Since the requirements depend on such conditions, the existing building and report should be reviewed to verify their accuracy. Recognize that 780 CMR:3400.3(6), (7), and (8) have unique requirements for Residential Use Groups, Assembly Use Groups, and Institutional Use Groups. All of the requirements of Chapter 34 need to be reviewed and understood for proper enforcement.

Lastly, because the Chapter 34 Report is based on building code requirements, the analysis will not impact any requirements from the 'Fire Laws' (MGL Chapter 148) or from the *Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code* (527 CMR).

**How to contact an OSFM Fire Protection Engineer:** if your jurisdiction contains, or is South of the Mass Pike - contact Jake Nunnemacher at 978-567-3377 or [jacob.nunnemacher@state.ma.us](mailto:jacob.nunnemacher@state.ma.us). For jurisdictions North of the Mass Pike - contact Dana Haagensen at 978-567-3376 or [dana.haagensen@state.ma.us](mailto:dana.haagensen@state.ma.us). ♦

## E-Mail Changes at DFS

**T**his past June, DFS switched its e-mail to the MassMail system run by the Commonwealth's Information Technology Division. This is a statewide system where DFS is now part of a 'global' listing that includes employees at the majority of other state agencies.

The MassMail conversion brings many advantages to DFS users particularly for coordinators, many of whom are on campus only for a limited time each week. MassMail provides all users with the ability to check their mail accounts from any Internet connected computer at any time!

There are a few changes that the public should be alerted to:

1. E-mail addresses with jane.doe@dfs.state.ms.us will be changed to jane.doe@state.ma.us. A small percentage of DFS's e-mail addresses used this format and are now changed. Addresses which already used jane.doe@state.ma.us will not change.
2. For a handful of addresses, the first and last name (before the @) needed to be changed because those names were already being used by people elsewhere in the MassMail system.

Please be aware in case any e-mails sent to DFS addresses are rejected or 'bounce back' to you over the next few weeks. Do not hesitate to follow up with a telephone call to your DFS contact to confirm the e-mail address. The updated addresses are also on the DFS website on the "Staff List" to be found under the link for "About DFS". ♦



## MFIRS V5 Coding

### Building Status

#### Vacant vs. Non-Vacant

There seems to be some confusion as to what this field and its codes represent. The Building Status field defines the operational status of the building involved in the fire. Two of the codes for this field are: *Vacant & Secured* and *Vacant & Unsecured*. A vacant building is one that is not occupied at any time, not just at the time of the fire. It is usually an abandoned building or a building that does not have any occupants or businesses residing in it.

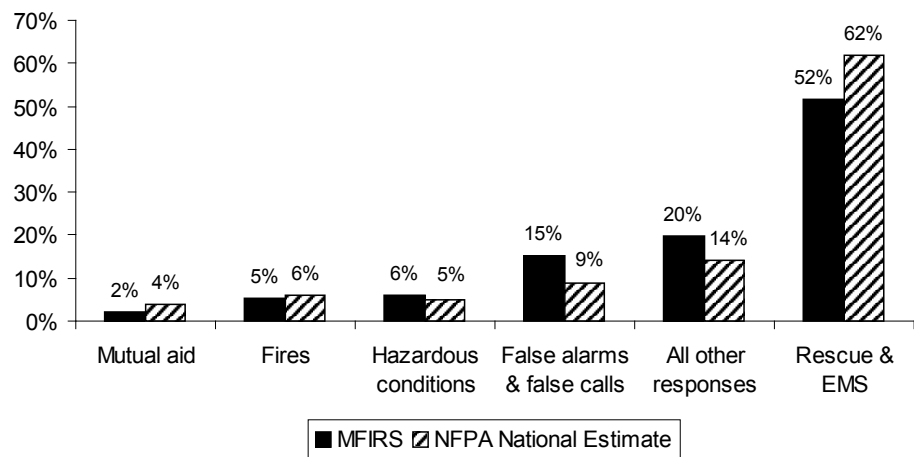
It does not include buildings such as storage units, and motor vehicle garages, or businesses after business hours with no one there. The code *In Normal Use* should be used for these scenarios. The code *Idle Not Routinely Used* should be used for seasonal properties and those that are used on a 'somewhat' regular basis (e.g. snack stands or ticket booths at playgrounds or athletic fields) when they are not occupied and operating. ♦

## Fire Data Facts – MA vs USA

In 2007, a little more than half, 52%, of all incidents reported to MFIRS were EMS or rescue type calls. Fifteen percent (15%) were false alarms, 5% were fires, 6% were hazardous condition calls, 2% were mutual aid given calls, and the remaining 20% were all other responses combined. Compared to the

results of the NFPA's 2007 *Fire Loss in the U.S.* During 2007 the national survey estimates Massachusetts fire departments responded to a lower percentage of rescue or EMS incidents, fires and mutual aid calls; and a higher percentage of false alarms, hazardous condition calls and other types of responses. ♦

MA vs NFPA National Estimate 2007 Incidents



**MFIRS**  
Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System

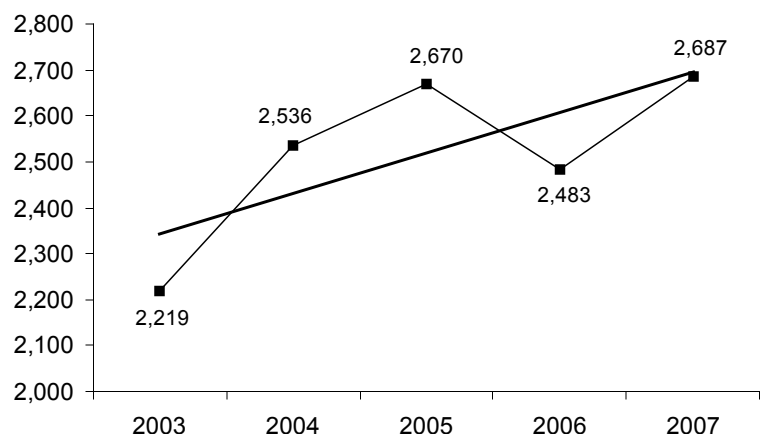
## Home Heating Fires

As the mercury drops from the colder temperatures of late fall and early winter and home heating fuel prices at all time highs, we in the fire service must be vigilant in the prevention of home heating fires. In 2007 fires caused by heating equipment were the second leading cause of residential fires. In Franklin and Hampshire counties it was the leading cause of fires in homes.

During the past five years in Massachusetts, 12,595 residential heating fires caused 14 civilian deaths, 92 civilian injuries, 123 firefighter injuries

and \$31.2 million in damages. Six (6) of these deaths were caused when space heaters started the fire. During the past 5 years, 1 in every 10 space heater fires killed a civilian. ♦

# of Home Heating Fires 2003 - 2007



# 2008 MFIRS Data

Please check to see if your department has sent in all the MFIRS reports to date. The Fire Data Unit should have all your reports from January through August. You should be sending them in on a monthly basis. You can contact the Fire Data Unit to confirm what reports have been received.

## Electronic Reporting

The email address to send your electronic MFIRS reports to is: [MFIRS.Report@state.ma.us](mailto:MFIRS.Report@state.ma.us). One or two days after your first submission via email please call Derryl Dion at (978) 567-3382 to confirm its receipt. Departments that are reporting electronically should be submitting their incidents on a monthly basis. If a department is having trouble with its computer systems, that department

should notify the Fire Data unit as soon as possible; and if the problem persists paper copies should be forwarded to DFS so they can be entered into the system here by hand.

## Fatal or Large Loss Fires

If you have a fire or explosion with a fatality or large loss (>\$1,000,000), please forward a paper copy of the MFIRS report with a completed Remarks section to Derryl Dion within two business days. The report should include the Basic, Fire, Civilian Fire and/or Fire Service Casualty Module(s), and Structure Fire Module (needed for all structure fires). This most likely will be a preliminary report and you can file the complete report at a later date unless otherwise noted. Every effort should be taken to make sure that these

reports are as complete as they can be given all of the information available at the end of your investigation.

If one of the state troopers from OSFM's Fire Investigation Unit (FIU) was involved with the investigation, please contact them periodically to see what they are reporting as their conclusions in their report. FIU reports are separate from your MFIRS reports, and using the team concept, both reports should reflect the same conclusions.

## Assistance

Please contact Derryl Dion, Research Analyst/MFIRS Manager at 978-567-3382 or [Derryl.Dion@state.ma.us](mailto:Derryl.Dion@state.ma.us) with any questions regarding MFIRS or to conduct fire data or histories research. ♦

SURE-LITE & ATLITE

## Exit and Emergency Lights Recall

September 1, 2008

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in cooperation with the firm named below, announced a voluntary recall of the following consumer product. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed.

**Name of Product:** Sure-Lite and AtLite Exit and Emergency Lights

**Units:** About 9,000

**Distributor:** Cooper Lighting Inc., of Peachtree City, Georgia

**Hazard:** The lights can malfunction and not stay illuminated in the event of a power failure. This could result in a failure to provide adequate lighting to guide building occupants to an exit in an emergency.

**Description:** The recalled emergency and exit lights are installed in commercial buildings such as hotels and office buildings. The recall includes the following model numbers, which are written on the inside of the removable front cover.

- 12UEL1SD24X
- CHEL1WHSDDTM
- UEL1WHSDDV
- 12UEL1SD24XTDM
- UELBKSD
- LPX70RBKDHSD
- 12UEL1SD24XWH
- UEL1BKSDHAZTDM
- LPX70RBKDHSD2146
- 6CHEL1SD24
- UEL1BKSDTDM
- LPX70RWHDDHSD
- 6CHEL1SD24WH
- UEL1SD
- LPX70RWHDDHSD2146
- AEL1BKSD
- UEL1SDA
- LPX70RWHDDHSDMRT
- AEL1BZSD
- UEL1SDAV
- LPXH70RBKDHSD
- AEL1BZSDTDM
- UEL1SDC
- LPXH70RBKDHSD284
- AEL1SD
- UEL1SDHAZ
- LPXH70RBKSD
- AEL1SDTDM
- UEL1SDHAZTDM
- LPXH70RWHDDHSD
- AEL1WHSDD
- UEL1SDTDM
- LPXH70RWHDDHSD212
- AEL1WHSDDTDM
- UEL1SDV
- LPXH70RWHDDHSD214
- CHEL1BKSD
- UEL1WHSDD
- LPXH70RWHDDHSD2146
- CHEL1SD
- UEL1WHSDDAV
- LPXH70RWHDDHSD284
- CHEL1SDTDM
- UEL1WHSDDHAZ
- LPXH70RWHDDHSDMRT2139
- CHEL1WHSDD
- UEL1WHSDDTDM
- LPXH70RWHSD

The date code is located inside the housing and is formatted as XXXX-DDD-YY. For example, the date

CONTINUED ON **PAGE 19**



The following are excerpts from press releases issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) regarding products recalled for fire or burn hazards. Consumers should immediately stop using any of these products and contact the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission or the manufacturer for instructions on how to proceed. The web address is: [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

## BENCH SCALE ADAPTERS

7/15/08 ..... 08-330

### Bench Scale Adapters

*American Weigh Scales*

The bench scale adapters can smoke, catch fire, & melt.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml08/08330.html>

## CAR CHARGES

8/26/08 ..... 08-374

Car Charges Used w/ Power System  
Plus 3 Million Candlepower Spotlights  
International Merchandising Service Inc.

## Sure-Lite & AtLite Recall...

*Continued from Page 18*

code "6746-356-07" means the product was manufactured on the 356th day of 2007. Only products with date codes between the 240th day of 2007 and the 101st day of 2008 are included in the recall.

**Sold to:** Authorized distributors nationwide from September 2007 through June 2008. Distributors resold and installed the lights for between \$200 and \$500.

**Remedy:** Cooper Lighting is contacting customers directly and is providing a free replacement product.

**Consumer Contact:** For additional information, contact Cooper Lighting at (800) 954-7228 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET Monday through Friday, or visit the firm's Web sites at [www.surelites-lighting.com](http://www.surelites-lighting.com) or [www.atlite-lighting.com](http://www.atlite-lighting.com) ♦

The car charger is incompatible w/the spotlight's battery, which can cause it to overcharge inside of the vehicle & pose a fire or burn hazard.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml08/08374.html>

## COFFEE MAKERS

8/26/08 ..... 08-372

### Kenmore (Elite) Coffee Makers

*Sears, Roebuck & Co.*

The wiring in the coffee maker can overheat posing burn & fire hazards.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml08/08372.html>



## FAX MACHINE

6/27/08 ..... 08-313

### HP Fax 1010 & 1010xi Machines

*Hewlett-Packard Co.*

An internal electrical component failure can cause overheating of the product posing a fire & burn risk.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml08/08313.html>



## GAS GRILLS

8/7/08 ..... 08-359

### Perfect Flame Double Lid 4-Burner Gas Grills

*Lowe's Home Centers, Inc.*

The cooking chamber of the grill can melt &/or ignite.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml08/08359.html>

## GLUE GUNS

6/24/08 ..... 08-310

### Crafters Square Hot Melt Mini Glue Guns

*Dollar Tree, Inc.*

The guns can short-circuit, causing the gun to smoke & posing a fire hazard.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml08/08310.html>



## HEAT RECOVERY VENTILATORS

8/20/08 ..... 08-369

### Light Commercial Heat Recovery Ventilators

*Venmar CES Inc.*

The motors in these units can overheat, posing a fire hazard.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml08/08369.html>



## LIGHTS

7/22/08 ..... 08-335

### Indoor Lighting Fixtures

*Lithonia Lighting*

A thermal protector could be missing from the lighting fixtures, posing a risk of overheating & fire.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml08/08335.html>

CONTINUED ON **PAGE 20**

## CPSC Recalls

Continued from Page 19

8/5/08 ..... 08-353

### Chicago Electric Halogen Work Lights

Harbor Freight Tools

The lights can overheat & melt, posing a fire & electrical shock risk.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prereel/prhtml08/08353.html>



### LOG SPLITTER

7/17/08 ..... 08-332

### SpeeCo & Huskee Brand Log Splitter Engines

American Honda Motor Corp.

Then engine's fuel tank can crack & leak posing a risk of fire or explosion.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prereel/prhtml08/08332.html>

### POWER LIGHT MODULES

8/22/08 ..... 08-371

#### Power Light Modules

GCI Technologies Corp.

Internal wiring in the module's circuit board is incorrectly installed, posing a risk of an electrical fire & burn hazards.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prereel/prhtml08/08371.html>



### POWER SUPPLIES

7/2/08 ..... 08-319

#### 13.8V DC Power Supplies

RadioShack Corp.

The power supplies are wired incorrectly, posing electrocution & fire hazards.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prereel/prhtml08/08319.html>



### RC HELICOPTER

6/26/08 ..... 08-315

#### Remote-Controlled Indoor Helicopter

Westminster Inc.

The rechargeable battery inside the helicopter can overheat, resulting in the helicopter's body melting, posing a fire & burn hazard.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prereel/prhtml08/08315.html>



7/24/08 ..... 08-341

#### Sky Scrambler & The Sharper Image Remote-Controlled Indoor Helicopter

Innovage LLC

The rechargeable lithium ion battery inside the helicopter can overheat, catch fire & ignite nearby combustibles.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prereel/prhtml08/08341.html>

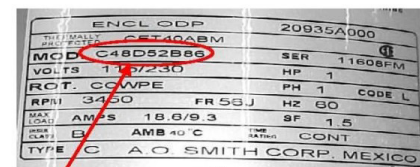
8/19/08 ..... 08-364

#### Remote-Controlled Indoor Helicopter

Hobbico Inc.

The rechargeable battery can overheat & catch fire while charging, igniting nearby combustible materials.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prereel/prhtml08/08364.html>



### WATER PUMP MOTORS

6/24/08 ..... 08-309

#### Water Pump Motors

A. O. Smith Electrical Products Co.

The water pump motors are mislabeled as 1-hp motors and under certain conditions may overheat, posing a fire hazard.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prereel/prhtml08/08309.html>

### WIRE SPLICES

8/20/08 ..... 08-367

#### Electrical Wire Splices (aka Butt Splice Connectors)

Molex

The splice can fail to hold the wires adequately together, posing a shock & fire hazard.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prereel/prhtml08/08367.html> ♦





# LICENSING EXAMS

The Office of the State Fire Marshal issues licenses to people and companies engaged in fireworks, blasting, explosives, cannon and mortar firing, special effects, special hazard systems and portable fire extinguishers. Information on applications, exam dates, to obtain new licenses, or to renew existing licenses may be obtained by calling 978-567-3700. Examinations for licenses are held quarterly. Filing deadlines, exam locations, dates and times can be found online at: [http://www.mass.gov/dfs/osfm/license\\_exams.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfs/osfm/license_exams.htm).

All license exams are offered at both Department of Fire Services locations: State Road in Stow, MA and One Prince Street (Northampton State Hospital) in Northampton, MA. Due to construction at DFS Stow, parking is severely limited and may include off-site parking. Please ride-share with co-workers whenever possible.

Applicants must be pre-registered for all license exams, no walk-ins permitted. Completed applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. on the deadline date listed below. If an

application is received after the applicable deadline, the applicant will not be allowed to sit for the exam.

Directions to our offices are listed on the web at:

[http://www.mass.gov/dfs/about\\_dfs/dfsmap.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfs/about_dfs/dfsmap.htm)

A list of study materials for each examination are listed on the web at:

[http://www.mass.gov/dfs/osfm/license\\_exams.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfs/osfm/license_exams.htm)

All exams begin promptly at 9:00 a.m.

## 2008 License Examination Schedule

Examinations	Examination Dates	Application Deadlines
Fire Extinguishers	October 29, 2008 January 28, 2009	October 17, 2008 January 1, 2009
Cannon/Mortar, Fireworks, Special Effects, Blasting, Blasting R&D	November 5, 2008 February 25, 2009	October 24, 2008 February 13, 2009

### STATUS REPORT OF

## Compliance and Enforcement Actions

The following is a status report of recent compliance and enforcement actions taken by the Office of the State Fire Marshal against individuals or companies for violations of MGL Chap. 148 and 527 CMR. The status of the action is provided and notation is made

regarding the effective date of the action. While other actions may be pending, only those individuals or companies who have had administrative hearings with decisions rendered will be documented in this space.

Should there be any question regarding the status of any license or certificate, please call the Office of the State Fire Marshal at any time for verification at 978-567-3700. ♦

### Compliance and Enforcement Actions by the Department of Fire Services

Name	Action Taken	Terms	Ends
<b>Blasting Certificate of Competency</b>			
Wayne E. Martin	2-year suspension	1-yr to serve 1-yr. probation	7/24/2009 7/24/2010
<b>Fire Equipment Certificate of Competency</b>			
James Tecce	Permanent Revocation	Prohibited from ever again holding a business reg. of any kind from DFS	
<b>Fire Equipment Certificate of Registration</b>			
Intra-City Supply Co.	5-year suspension	1 yr. to serve, 4 yrs. probation	5/23/2008 5/12/2012



# GRADUATIONS

FIREFIGHTERS GRADUATE

## Call/Volunteer Firefighter Training Program

### **Class #23**

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan presented certificates of completion to members of the Call/Volunteer Firefighter Training class #23 in a graduation ceremony at 7:30 p.m. on 6/24/08. The recruit graduation took place at Joseph Case High School in Swansea.

The Call/Volunteer Firefighter Training program is unique in that it delivers a standard recruit training curriculum, meeting national standards, on nights and weekends to accommodate the schedule of firefighters in suburban and rural areas. Bringing the training closer to the firefighters often means more firefighters

can participate. This program was held at area fire department training facilities. The Fire Chiefs' Association of Massachusetts persuaded the Legislature to financially support this innovative delivery of off-site training.

### **28 Firefighters from 11 Departments**

The twenty-eight graduates; twenty-seven men and one woman, represent the eleven fire departments of: Acushnet, Berkley, Dartmouth Dist. #3, Freetown, North Attleboro, Plainville, Raynham, Rehoboth, Sherborn, Swansea, and Westport.

### **Class #24**

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan presented certificates of completion to members of the Call/Volunteer Firefighter Training class #23 in a graduation ceremony at 7:30 p.m. 7/10/08. The recruit graduation took place at Joseph Case High School in Swansea.

### **28 Firefighters from 11 Departments**

The twenty-eight graduates; twenty-seven men and one woman, represent the eleven fire departments of: Acushnet, Berkley, Dartmouth Dist. #3, Freetown, North Attleboro, Plainville, Raynham, Rehoboth, Sherborn, Swansea, and Westport.



Class # 23

Photo by: Student